

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FISHERIES

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A BRIEF REVIEW OF WORK DONE BY M. J. O'CONNOR IN
SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA FROM APRIL 30, 1923.

JAN 28 1924

Active operations commenced April 30, 1923, at the time the salmon fry were migrating from the Chilkat River, lakes and tributaries.

From April 30 to May 5 was engaged in keeping gulls from taking the fry in the shallow pools from one to four miles of the Chilkat River.

May 8 on seal patrol off Nicker Islands and Cape Edwards on the west side of Chichagof Island. While patrolling Nicker Island the carcasses of two fur seal were found at low tide, covered with stones. (See Daily report of May 13)

June 10 the writer was sent to Yakutat to patrol the Situck and Anklin Rivers and to prevent illegal fishing therein. Arrived at Yakutat June 12 and proceeded to the Situck and Anklin Rivers. Found only the set net fishermen operating there at that time. There was no illegal fishing being done by the set net fishermen, they keeping their nets not less than 100 yards apart and were not fishing more than one-third of the stream except in a few cases on bars that were dry at low tide. They were told if they intended fishing the bars they would have to keep shortening their nets so that at no time more than 1/3 of the water was occupied. They stated they did not know this was illegal fishing and discontinued setting their nets on the bars in the Situck River. This condition did not exist however on the Anklin River as there was plenty water at all times where the nets were operated.

July 19 the seine fishermen moved out to the Situck and Lost Rivers. They were told before starting that no nets would be allowed to be set less than 100 yards of any other net and that not more than 1/3 of the stream should be fished at any time or stage of the tide. They did not take very kindly to this at first but after a day or two were satisfied with this condition excepting the crew of two boats that fished at the mouth and inside the mouth of the Situck River and Johnson Slough. They held they had always fished there and should be allowed to continue to do so. In fact the Indian who was fishing Johnson Slough threatened to take the matter to court in order to establish his right to fish as he had always done in the past. He was informed by the writer that he could take the matter to court but until the court had decided the case he would not be allowed to fish inside the line drawing between the stake set up on the west side of the Situck and on the east side of Johnson Slough.

From June 19 to July 19 the crews of the above two boats were not satisfied, trying in every way to induce the writer to go down to the

mouth of the inlet while they stay at the mouth of the river. The writer believes they wanted to have him out of the way so as to take the salmon that were inside the mouth of the Situck River and in the hole inside the mouth of Johnson Slough.

June 18 went to Dry Bay on the cannery tender, at which place there were a large number of hair seal seen. Was informed by the fishermen at Dry Bay that they recovered on an average of less than 35% of the salmon, both King and Red caught in their nets and in some cases as high as 70% but in no place in the bay where they have attempted to set nets has the average been less than 20%. They also informed the writer that two sand islands up the bay is a hauling out ground for the hair seal in the spring when the water is low. These islands however are covered when the river raises. From the middle of April to the first of June they are out and the hair seal occupy them during that time in very large numbers. (See daily report of June 18.)

Returned to June July 22. On patrol at mouth of streams and traps in Lynn Canal, Icy Straits, Stephens Passage, Chatham Strait and Frederick Sound.

From July 23 to September 14 there were 8 ^{trap} violations of the weekly closed season and one for fishing with a seine less than 100 yards from the mouth of the creek, all of which were reported to the office at Juneau and later given to the U. S. Attorney, who presented all cases to the Grand Jury except

Hidden Inlet Packing Company, Trap #1, T.L. 23-387, located at White Rock, Chatham Strait. The heart wall on one side was not open. (See daily reports of November and December).

From September 15 to 28 inclusive had an engineer from the War Department on board. He visited the traps, cannery docks and buildings to ascertain whether arrangements had been made for the lighting of traps during the winter season and permits issued by the War Department for docks and buildings on the docks. In cases where there had been no permits issued they were advised to apply for one immediately.

The writer was then ordered to Ketchikan to appear before the Grand Jury at that place where indictments were found against 37 traps for violation of Chapter 95, Territorial Laws of 1923. (See daily report of October 1 to 15).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that two watchmen be placed at the Chilkat River between the mouth and the 5 miles to keep gulls from feeding on

the fry during the migrating season and that these watchmen be given shot guns, not necessarily to kill with, but for firing at intervals, thus keeping the gulls from lighting in the shallow pools and bars and feeding on the fry. The migration occurs between April 26 and May 20. It might be well to take the matter up with the Biological Survey, who have charge of the protection of migratory birds and conduct scientific inquiry along the lines of determining the true economic status of such forms. They might also be induced to expand their investigations to damage done by hair seal to the salmon industry as this work may be allied to the predatory animal work which is now conducted by the Biological Survey.

It is also recommended that the fur seal patrol be continued off shore and not so much along the shore as all halibut boats leaving Ketchikan and Prince Rupert going to the Yakutat banks or further westward have one or more rifles on board, in some cases as high as four and the writer believes that the number of seals killed by poachers for their pelts are only a small percent compared with the number killed by shooting at them just to determine how good a shot the men are who have the rifles. Primarily they do not shoot for the purpose of recovering the skin but more as a person would at a target, forgetting every time they hit a seal they may kill it, and if so, it sinks and the skin cannot be recovered. Many halibut men have told the writer that there are numbers of seal killed in this manner. Attached is a tentative estimate for killing the hair seals at Dry Bay.

It is also recommended that more stream watchmen be employed to protect the mouths of streams and keep fishermen outside the protected areas.

M. J. O'Connor, Warden.

JAN 23 1924

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ESTIMATE FOR KILLING SEALS AT DRY BAY

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1 Ton	40% DuPont Gelatine Dynamite.....	\$ 340.00
1 Only	30 Hole Blasting Battery.....	35.00
500 "	#6-6 Electric Caps, per 100 caps \$7.74.....	38.70
1500'	#14 Duplex Wire, about 56#-per 100#.....	34.78
4 men for 10 days trenching and skinning seals - \$5.00	per man per day.....	200.00
Freight for powder from Juneau to Yakutat.....		<u>50.00</u>
Total.....		\$ 698.48